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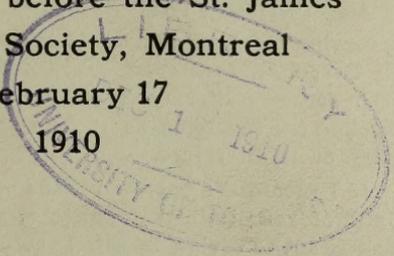
"Shake-Speare"

AN ENQUIRY

Paper read before the St. James
Literary Society, Montreal

February 17

1910



BY

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Toronto
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1910

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,—I make no apology for appearing before St. James Literary Society at the invitation of its Executive, to discuss, albeit very imperfectly, a problem of such supreme literary interest, amazing import, and intense fascination, involving as it does the creation of the crowning glory of all literature.

If I exceed the narrow bounds of allotted time, and the wide limit of your indulgent patience, you will remember that my task is not to review in detail the whole of a most intricate and far-reaching question, but to endeavor to extract the essence and place it before you in a condensed form, suited to the occasion and your presumed taste, and perhaps bear with me.

If you should find any of it as unpalatable as polar pemmican, I trust that some nutriment may yet remain to fortify you in the cold and uncertain temperature which will surround you in those fields of adventure and discovery which I hope you may wish to explore, and to which I but attempt to point a way.

S. M. B.

MONTREAL, February 17th, 1910.

“Shake-Speare”: An Enquiry

Fifty years “are but as a day” in a nation’s history, and that brief period of time comprising the end of the Tudor and the beginning of the Stuart dynasties—the days “of Eliza and our James”—that is to say, the last quarter of the sixteenth and the first quarter of the seventeenth centuries, or, to be more exact in covering the subject-matter to be considered, from 1561 to 1626, is one of the most glorious in the annals of England.

Then it was that the foot of intrepid adventure set forth to new worlds and planted itself firm to hold and colonize for England; then it was that her barking sea-dogs ravished the Spanish Main, rifled the freighted galleons of their golden cargoes, and rammed whole Armadas “full fifty fathoms deep” in the engulfing sea; then it was that “nest of singing birds” lifted their tuneful voices in glorious new song, resurrected the twin muses of poesy and the drama from their age-long burial, and gave them new birth into immortal life; then it was that “holy men of old,” under royal warrant of a learned and pious king, sent forth in the vernacular of the common people the inspiring message of the “Book of Life”; then it was that “Shake-Speare”—“Our English Homer”—was born, lived, worked, and died.

And what a splendid honor roll blazes into view as we scan the storied page! Raleigh, Frobisher, Gilbert, Hawkins, Drake, and Howard—“admirals all,” and gentlemen-rovers to boot—lifting high the royal standard on home and foreign seas. Leicester and Burleigh, Bacon and Coke, Cecil and Buckingham, Essex and Southampton—to name but a handful—councillors true and pilots tried, guiding the ship of state through storm and stress and perils dire. Sidney, Spenser, Daniel, Wither, Herbert, Suckling, Lovelace, and Herrick—“choiring like cherubim”—lilted their undying notes in epic, lyric, and hymn. Heywood and Peale, Nash and Greene, Marlowe and Webster, Massinger and Ford, Beaumont and Fletcher, Jonson *and* “Shake-Speare”—the king of them all—then raised the bedraggled muse from the rags and tatters of the old “moralities” and “miracle plays,” inspiring with new hope, imbuing with fresh purpose, reclothing in most witching guise, and staging for all the world to see and read and ponder in a new-created English drama.

Of all the splendid products of that golden age, of supreme importance and highest value to the world at large, none are esteemed of greater worth than the Authorized Version of the English Bible, issued in 1611, and the literature we know as "Shake-Speare," more particularly the plays as comprised in the Great Folio of 1623. Merely as *books*, original copies now command fabulous prices, and by common consent they stand at the head of all compilations of "lists of best books." Explorers in the wilds, wishing to have with them some comfort of the literature of civilization, and under the necessity of reducing their baggage to the extreme limit, select these two books as their sole companions.

The Bible is, and properly so, held in the highest reverence and esteem by right-thinking people; but all know the extreme view taught by ultra-religionists of former days—a view fast being dissipated under the searchlight of the school of latter-day higher criticism. Far from denying the "*inspiration*" behind the labors of holy men of lofty ideals, rather, indeed, do men hold that *no* great literary achievement was or *is* possible except the "Divine Fire" descend upon the already prepared altar and light the sacrifice of soul involved when one would so praise God in rendering Him back the bestowed gift of genius in the service of His creatures.

Though in a sense iconoclastic, and to some pious souls sacrilegious, Biblical criticism, instead of being destructive, is rather *con*-structive in rebuilding a new and more worthy edifice out of the apparent ruins of the old. Questions of authorship being settled, the motif of the work takes on a new and intelligible meaning. So-called history resolves itself naturally and rationally into mere folk-lore and legend. What may be called history is interpreted in the light of other chronicles and latter-day knowledge. Stories of the marvellous doings of national heroes commissioned of God are read as are the mythical nursery tales preserved among all peoples. Psalms bearing a royal imprimatur are found to be but a compilation of a national, religious, poetical literature. Mystical interpretation of other high-placed composition gives way before the matter-of-fact reading of an Oriental, and somewhat sensuous, love story. Prophecy is but another name for insight into the spirit of the age and foresight in warning of the inevitable consequences. Alleged witnesses of passing events are tested as to their credibility and the possibility of having been mistaken. Miracle is explained on natural grounds, or altogether denied as utterly incredible, even to the extent of declaring that the highest human personality—"God manifest in the flesh"—came into the world just as every other little human baby has done before or since.

If exacting, all-testing, modern scientific criticism does not scruple to lay profane hand on the very Ark of the Covenant, shall it hold back and refrain from touching this "Idol of the Theatre," jealously guarded though it be by postulating acolyte and vested hierarch, and shall the skeptical modern world

stand longer in baffled Napoleonic wondering on the arid sands before the shrouded mystery of a dumb Sphinx without some effort being made to wrest from it its age-old secret, and obtain a satisfying answer to importunate questioning?

And what is this inscrutable riddle, this miracle of literature, that bursts upon our view from the gloom of an Elizabethan playhouse, whose mystery deepens and whose marvels grow, while men stand in amazed awe before it, as votaries kneeling before the shrined relics of a saint?

In brief, and without venturing unwarrantably to trespass in the fields of textual criticism—much of which, in the light of traditional interpretation, is necessarily pure conjecture—that which we call “Shake-Speare,” as all the world knows, is comprised in certain poems, a collection of sonnets, and a compilation of plays, 36 in number, gathered together and issued in folio form in 1623 by self-constituted sponsors. Apart from other stray pieces, the poems are two in number, entitled “Venus and Adonis” and “The Rape of Lucrece,” of considerable length, and classic in origin, thought and style; models of form, rhyme, metre, and diction; written in the purest English, and bearing evidence of being the productions of a scholar fresh from his studies in the university. They were printed in 1593 and 1594 respectively, dedicated to the Earl of Southampton, and signed “William Shakespeare.” The sonnets are 154 in number, of the proper fourteen-line construction, but differing from the old Petrarchan model in that they are composed of three quatrains ending with a rhymed couplet, and being what is known as the Shakesperean form of sonnet. They were printed in the name of the hyphenated “Shake-Speare” in 1609, but apparently without authority, the circumstances surrounding the issue being peculiar, not to say suspicious, and their *raison d'être* and meaning—whether objective and personal, or subjective and metaphysical—is still a matter of debate, even among the elect Fellowship of Scholars. Sidney Lee says of them: “Shakespeare’s sonnets possess an incomparable poetic merit and a psychological interest which entitle them to a place apart from other examples of the like branch of literary effort.” (Elizabethan Sonnets, Introduction, p. IX.) The plays comprised in the folio constitute—with Pericles, which was not included—what is the admitted “Shake-Speare” canon, although some fifteen other known plays were issued and attributed to the same authorship.

The extraordinary “make-up” of this remarkable book; the fantastic and suggestive paging, or entire absence of it in places; the ill-founded assertions of its alleged sponsors; the equivocal wording of the eulogistic introduceries and dedication; the hideous absurdity of the so-called “portrait”—which is like nothing in all contemporary or other portraiture, and as different as night from day to that other, and perhaps more nearly correct, portrait on the wall of Stratford Church—all suggest a most ingenious attempt to mislead, and indicate that here is “something more than meets the eye,” to which the irreverent do not hesitate to apply the expressive colloquialism, “Fake!” and which experts in cryptography declare to be a mass of cun-

ning and intricate cipher-work, alleging that the date of publication, 1623, was specially chosen by the real publishers because of the peculiar mathematical significance of the figures in the application of a cypher.

Apart from financial considerations involved in the production of such costly work for a limited market, there are some noteworthy features deserving of more than passing attention with respect to the publication of this world-revered book.

Of the 36 plays which it contains, 18 were previously issued in quarto form, at first anonymously, afterwards with the authorship attributed. Of the remaining 18 hitherto unprinted, some 12 were supposed also to have been staged, either in private or publicly; but, so far as is known, the other half dozen were entirely new, and had never before been heard of. The folio versions of the quarto editions bear evidence of such revision as in some instances to amount to a practical rewriting; even the quarto edition of "Othello," printed as late as 1622, differs materially from the revised version in the 1623 folio, and the supposed author had been dead and buried since 1616!

Moreover, in 1632, there was published the Second Folio, and in 1664 the Third Folio, and the fingers of "Grand Possessors," other than those ostensibly behind the publication of these various editions, are clearly traced, "because," as one writer (Donnelly) observes, "in each of the three *each page is a duplicate of the same page in the 1623 Folio, beginning and ending with the same words, and repeating even the same apparent errors of pagination, spelling, bracketing, and hyphenation of the text!*" These peculiarities disappear in the Fourth Folio of 1685, and no explanation of coincidence or chance will account for these circumstances; rather, indeed, does it, as it is suggested, indicate the working out of an understanding of some kind, by some organization, on some definite plan, covering some fixed time, and for some great purpose.

Passing from these externals, and as expressly enjoined to "Look not on his picture, but his book!" let us do so with every certainty of finding there all that might be hoped for, even beyond our highest imagining.

The plays are in three divisions—"comedies, histories, tragedies." In the historical plays we see embodied an idea that seems strangely familiar—that of *making history visible*, as expounded by a certain "grave and reverend senior," whose name must not even be whispered in such disreputable company as that of play-actors! And what a splendid cohort of exalted personages is made to pass in review before the audiences assembled in the Royal Palace, the mansions of the great, or before or upon the common stage of the public theatre—in *extenso* or in excised versions as the differing capacities and tastes of spectators called for. How the blood even of the town blades and their frolicsome light-o'-loves masquerading in male attire—"cod-piece" and all—must have stirred, and the "sweaty night-caps" of the "groundlings"

in the "yard" been tossed to the unroofed sky, as they saw England's past glories unroll before their delighted eyes; and how the pulses of even the jaded crowned and coroneted auditors in courtly halls must have leaped in response to those magnificent apostrophes to England's greatness, thundered from the lips of the favorite star of the "Company of my Lord Chamberlain," or one of "Her Majesty's Servants"! Think, too, how the penetrative, cultured few must have been lost in amaze as they saw the poet-philosopher, with skilled and unerring hand, *lay bare the naked soul*, dissecting with anatomical precision the follies, passions, prejudices, and beliefs of poor, sick humanity, and presenting his conclusions of instruction and warning in what was to the superficial view but a tale of love, or a bloody tragedy! With what wondrous imagination does he weave together his scraps and fragments of old tales gleaned from all lands, literatures, and languages! How the dry and dusty "*chronicle*" leaps into new life and living history as it flows from breathing lips hot from an inspired pen! What deeps of vast and all-embracing learning are disclosed as scholars track metaphor and simile, allusion and phrase, back to their classic origin in untranslated authors; as lawyers discover in poem, sonnet, and play phrase and technical term thick-strewn and used as the commonplaces of speech and dialogue to a degree that shows this writer to be a pastmaster of the craft; as medical men declare him to have a knowledge of the healing art far in advance of his age, and, in some measure, yet of this; and as students in the arts of music, horticulture, seamanship, husbandry, and specialists in the handicrafts claim him for their own! Philologists—the language-makers—discover in him the master word-artist, borrowing, transforming, *coining*, as fancy wills; experimenting in novel root-derivations, compiling a new-created English language, and accumulating a vocabulary more than double that of Milton, the greatest classicist of our mother-tongue! What an air of the born aristocrat surrounds him as he breathes his life into his stage creations! Not a false note or misplaced step do any one of them make as they move about their appointed place, even the highest, as those "to the manner born," and with what condescension does he stoop to patter familiarly with the lowly in the jargon of the rascal and the rogue, the clod-hopper and the clown! In what spirit of poetic frenzy is it all conceived; with what soaring imagination is it given form and substance; and with what divine fire is it all fused into one immortal whole, let those who better can attempt to say. "We may at least join with Coleridge in his apostrophe: "Merciful, wonder-making Heaven! What a man was this Shakespeare! Myriad-minded, indeed, he was!" or agree with Carlyle in his summing up of him as "An unparalleled mortal," and perhaps permit a much humbler writer to offer his testimony in these lines:

Mr. William Shakespeare's
Comedies, Histories and Tragedies,
London, 1623.

Immortal Trilogy—Love's Testament,
Fame's ' In Excelsis," Passion's Litany—
Deathless, imperishable Trinity!
Excalibur, burnished armipotent,
King's panoply, tyrants' admonishment,
Pierian Spring of loftiest minstrelsy,
Flower of all speech, bloom of all poesy,
Thrall'd lips' Great Charter of enfranchisement—
Last of our envied England's Three, first wrung
From puissant arrogance at Runnymede,
Writ with his blood by martyred Tyndale's pen,
Eternized by her SHAKESPEARE'S herald tongue
Unto the last-born of this dowered breed
Of Island-Empire-building Englishmen!

Thus, in briefest possible form, with due reserve and proper respect, would one of the least of his countless admirers venture to appraise "Shake-Speare." And now of him to whom tradition and repute assigns the authorship.

The life-story of the putative author, as evolved by the laborious researches of the world of English scholars, students, and investigators—apart from the mass of assumption and conjecture respecting his alleged achievements in literature—may be given shortly as follows:

William Shakspere, or Shaxper, or Shagsper, or any one of the scores of discovered variants—not one of which, however, agrees with the "heroically-sounding" and never-varying "SHAKE-SPEARE," with or without the hyphen, of the publisher's page—was born on or about April 22, 1564, the exact date being uncertain, in Stratford-on-Avon, Warwickshire, and was baptized on the 26th of the same month. His father was John Shakspere, who pursued the trades of glover and wool-stapler, and dealt in corn, leather, and other articles. His mother's name was Mary Arden, and both parents were of peasant stock. The town was filthy and insanitary to a degree inconceivable in these days of civic hygiene—the elder Shakspere, notwithstanding the provision of public dumping-grounds, having once been fined for accumulating a *dung-hill* before his premises. It was, moreover, according to Halliwell-Phillips, a "bookless neighborhood"; the family was illiterate, and leading citizens signed their names with a mark. The father was at one time fairly well-to-do, and held some minor offices in the public gift, but later his fortunes

had so declined that he was imprisoned for debt. There is no evidence that the lad ever attended school, but, if he did so at all, his schooling ended with his thirteenth year, when he was required to assist his father at his trade. Granted this modicum of education, it consisted of lessons in the "Hornbook," the Catechism, and such scraps and sentences as might be learned by rote from "Lily's Latin Grammar"—satirized in the "Merry Wives of Windsor"—the whole impressed upon the youthful memory by means of the supple birch rod vigorously wielded by the typical pedagogue of the day. His youth was wild and riotous—a story being told of a drinking-bout between the bibbers of Stratford and the toppers of a neighboring village, in which, the carrying capacity of the Stratford ale-butts being inferior to that of their opponents, the former were, necessarily, defeated, and our hero slept over night under a sheltering crab-tree, which for long, and with better authenticity, was pointed out among the original Shakespeare relics. He was married at the age of 18 to a woman seven years older than himself, and from the evidences of haste exhibited in the "Marriage Bond," and the fact that six months after this ill-assorted union a child—"the premature Susannah"—was born, it is inferred that pressure had been brought to accomplish the marriage. As a result of proceedings taken against him by Sir Thomas Lucy for deer-stealing—an incident alluded to in the plays—he fled to London, and there, naturally, sought asylum and comfort from friends among the actors of the play-houses. He was given employment in the menial capacity of horse-holder for the gallants who rode to the theatre, subsequently being promoted to the office of call-boy, at length rising to the status of actor, and finally becoming a part proprietor, or at least a sharer in the profits, of the theatre and wealthy beyond common through the profits accruing from the production of plays by the latest popular author, precisely as, we learn from a diary preserved at Dulwich College, his neighbor, Philip Henslowe, appears to have done. While he may have made periodical visits to his home town, his life was necessarily lived where his business tied him; and considering the unsavory reputation of the players' guild; the vile associations of his *milieu*; the scandalous stories of his amours in outwitting his fellows in the favor of the too-complacent citizens' wives, and the engrossing claims of his money-getting ventures, the influences formative of nature and character may well be conceived. He *made money* in large measure, and some of it he invested in London and Stratford property. He twice applied to the Heralds' College for a grant of coat-armour to better adorn that "gentility" to which he aspired, but as they were supported by false allegations, and based on unfounded claims, the applications were *refused*, and the use of the familiar arms and crest was, and is, wholly unwarranted and unauthorized. He retired to Stratford to the important "place of lordship" which he had purchased, there to enjoy the congenial society the locality afforded, employing his revenues—a portion of which came from the share in the Tithes of Stratford which he had acquired—in loaning

petty sums to his neighbors and friends, and promptly suing when payment was delayed. Some of his time was evidently occupied in brewing or malting, as accounts sued for show they were for malt delivered. He died in 1616, on or about the anniversary of his birth, from a fever contracted as a result of another drinking-bout celebrated in company with the poets Drayton and Jonson. He was buried, 17 feet deep, it is said, in the chancel of Stratford Church, not because of his assumed "gentility," or in tribute to his supposed intellectual worth—rather, indeed, in face of existing legislation which classed his trade of actor with the vagabondage of rogues and thieves—but solely by right of ownership of the Tithes which conveyed that distinction. A most extraordinary inscription, grotesque in carving, and cryptic in character, invoking a witch's curse on the disturber of his bones, was placed on the slab over his grave—the original stone having been broken was replaced in the early half of the 19th century, and the inscription now existing has none of the uncouth features shown by Malone to have been present in the original—and an imposing monument, with eulogistic epitaph, erected on the chancel wall, neither of them by any known authority. Indeed, Sir Edwin Durning-Lawrence contends, on the authority of Rowe and earlier illustrators, that the present monument is not the one originally erected, and shows by their drawings the remarkable difference between the two. His will was conceived in the spirit of a parvenu seeking to found and perpetuate a "family" on the strength of his hoarded groats and pence. He bequeathed small sums to friends and fellow-actors "to buy them rings," and remembered the "Sweet Ann Hathaway" of love's young dream, as an afterthought, and in an interlineation by the bequest to her, as perhaps was fitting, of his "*second* best bed." He remembered his "silver gilt bowl," and provided for the entail in favor of children's children to be, but never a mention of a favorite book or precious manuscript, or a thought or provision for the care of those "brain-children" as dear to an author as those of his own flesh and blood—the *inference is clear!* The scrivener who engrossed the will evidently did so in the belief that the testator could not write, as he closed it with the formula: "Witness my *seal*," erasing this word, and substituting "hand," when he discovered a capacity to sign a name. This was done three times in varying fashion, indicative of one otherwise illiterate, and those three signatures on the will, two upon other legal papers, and one, recently unearthed by Professor Wallace attached to a deposition in a petty law suit—some of these being now, indeed, held to be of doubtful authenticity as personal signatures—are the sole record and only evidence of this pen ever having been put to paper. The recent much-heralded "discoveries" of Professor Wallace in his researches among the archives of London in no sense touch the point at issue, the revelation of deponents in lovers' quarrels and business disputes simply going to show the commonplace life of a man actively engaged in profitable theatrical ventures with associates of like calibre.

A simple story, easily understandable, commonplace even, by reason of oft-repetition, this rise from poverty to affluence, but—"Marry this man to his verse!" cry we, with Emerson, and concur with him in answering: "I surely cannot!" To attempt such unholy union would seem to involve the abandonment of judgment and the dethronement of reason, and imply a credulity out-miracling Miracle!

It must not be forgotten, in these days when contemporary ascription and title-page attribution is mistakenly held to be sufficient to fully establish a claim to possession, that the "Shakespeare Question" was very much alive 300 years ago, and that the mystery surrounding them is as old as the Plays themselves. The dramatists of the day were fully awake to the new voice that was stirring the senses of the play-goers, and bidding fair to woo them away from the waning charm of the old minstrels, pipe they never so cunningly. What does it mean? Who is the piper to whom these stage puppets dance as they are bid? But question as they might, and suspect as they would, they must be very careful what they say, as the penalty for libel might be exacted in ears or hands or tongues for the sin of exercising them unduly. There is no manner of doubt concerning a certain proprietor of theatres and exploiter of poets' wares, but even he must be handled with care lest trouble come of it; hence the need for speaking circumspectly, and writing indirectly, although one may, indeed, in so doing, be somewhat free in the use of words. Here are a few choice phrases with which one relieves his burdened soul:

... "The ingrafted over-flow of some kill-cow conceit . . . no more learning in their skulls . . . nor art in their brains than was nourished in a serving man's idleness . . . could scarcely latinize their neck-verse if they should have need . . . idiot-masters that intrude themselves . . . think to outbrave better pens with the swelling bombast of bragging blank verse . . . yet English Seneca read by candle-light yields many good sentences, as 'blood is a beggar,' and so forth; and if you entreat him fair on a frosty morning, he will afford you whole Hamlets, I should say handfuls, of tragical speeches."

(Nash, *Introduction to Greene's Menaphon*, 1589).

This is interesting both as a study in words and in showing the difficulty Nash had in knowing "just where he was at," and "the point" of course, "is in the application." Here is another choice bit:

"Others . . . if they come to write or publish anything in print, it is either distilled out of ballads, or borrowed of theological poets, which, for their calling and gravity being loth to have any profane pamphlets pass under their own hand, get some other Batillus to set their name to their verses. Thus is the ass made proud by this underhand brokery, and he that cannot write English without the help of clerks of parish churches, will needs make himself the father of interludes." (Greene, *Farewell to Folly*, 1591.)

This is a little more pointed, but Greene, as we shall see, can do much better; meanwhile, some "testimony" from that chief witness for the defence, Ben Jonson, is submitted. It is No. 56 in his "Epigrams," and is entitled,

ON POET-APE.

"Poor Poet-Ape that would be thought our chief,
Whose works are e'en the frippery of wit,
From brokage has become so bold a thief
As we the robbed, leave rage and pity it.
At first he made low shifts, would pick and glean,
Buy the reversion of old plays. Now grown
To a little wealth and credit in the scene
He takes up all, makes each man's wit his own,
And told of this he slights it. Tut, such crimes
The sluggish, gaping auditor devours;
He marks not whose 'twas first, and aftertimes
May judge it to be his as well as ours.
Fools! as if half-eyes will not know a fleece
From locks of wool, and shreds from the whole piece?"

There is little doubt about the "point" of Ben's satirical lines, and less difficulty in their "application"; and now let us hear another word about which there is no ambiguity at all:

"There is an upstart crow beautified with our feathers, that with his tiger's heart wrapped in a player's hide, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you, and being an absolute Johannes Factotum is in his own conceit the only Shakescene in a country." (Greene, *Goatsworth of Wit*, 1592.)

Words of one's own are superfluous in the presence of such vigorous English, and their acidity is only surpassed by the armament wielded in the present day by the champions of the much satirized adapter. One word more from these old masters of quip and banter and we pass on:

"Get thee to London . . . there thou shalt learn to be frugal . . . and to feed upon all men, to let none feed upon thee, to make thy hand a stranger to thy pocket, thy heart slow to perform thy tongue's promise, and when thou feelest thy purse well lined, buy thee some place of lordship in the country, that, growing weary of playing, thy money may bring thee to dignity and reputation. Then thou needest care for no man, nor not for them that before made thee proud with speaking their words upon the stage . . . for I have heard, indeed, of some that have gone to London very meanly, and have come in time to be exceeding wealthy." (Ratsie's *Ghost*, London, 1605.)

Much more, indeed, there is, and perhaps some of it inspired, but these quotations, given, it is hoped, not too lengthily, will fully serve all purposes of invective, were one at all so inclined. In dismissing "the only Shakescene," the man who claimed no

rights and disclaimed no aspersions, but merely pocketed his gains in silence, it cannot, perhaps better be done than in the words of one of the latter-day writers, who closes his book thus:

"Was this man, uneducated, as his contemporaries called him, an impostor, as everyone who knew him in the character of a dramatist called him—was this the man whose vocabulary, enriched with the spoils of five languages besides his own, was greater, three times greater, it would seem, than that of any other mortal who ever lived? Must we permit the nineteenth century to go out and join the vast congregation of the ages stained with a superstition so palpable, so humiliating to us, so unspeakably absurd as this?"

(Edwin Reed, *Bacon vs. Shakespeare*, 1897, p. 281.)

In approaching the question from the other side, however, we do so in a different spirit, well knowing of the need for all our powers of reasoning and penetration for its elucidation, and were we called upon to prove the paternity of these "orphaned heirs," we should naturally proceed in the direction of elimination of the impossible in the endeavor to arrive at the probable, possible, and actual, just in the rational way in which students have gone to work in their Herculean task. Conscious of the distinct flavor, and sensible of the marked unity characteristic of this literature, which has a classification by itself, and can only be described fittingly by its own derivative, "Shakespearean," we are constrained to set aside the theories of a composite authorship advanced by some writers, and are impelled to look for a single entity who alone is responsible for its creation. Had these works come down to us anonymously, difficulties now attaching would have vanished into thin air, and the green-room of the Globe Theatre, or the actor-manager's private office, would have been the last places in which to look for a concealed author. It is just because of the deliberate intention, for good and sufficient reasons, on the part of the author, to foist the paternity upon another, whose silence was secured by ample consideration, that has caused such confusion, the few stray contemporary allusions of equivocal interpretation, on the one hand, more than offset by the gibes and sneers and flat denials of the smallest capacity in the writing craft by the poets of the day—quickly silenced, or explained away, by those fully informed—on the other, but serving further to confuse.

Passing attempt to cast doubt upon accepted belief was made in a work of fiction published in 1848, but the first serious attack was simultaneously and independently made by Delia Bacon in her scintillating article published in the January number of *Putnam's Magazine*, 1856, and by William H. Smith, in a letter to Lord Ellesmere, later in the same year, the one by implication, and the other directly, attributing the authorship to Lord Bacon, and both to the horror and indignation of affronted orthodoxy. The Englishman, after having amplified his letter into a little book and shot his bolt, promptly retired from the fray, complacently leaving *Time* and the disputants to settle

the matter. The brilliant American woman elaborated her theories into a large work, and, her *engaged* series of magazine articles having been *suppressed*, and denied further hearing by publisher, printer, and public in her native land, found all three in England, and her book, written under stress of illness and poverty, was flung to the lions of criticism with an introductory by Hawthorne. The story of her hopes and aims, her struggles and failures, her distemper and death, as sympathetically told by her nephew, is one of the most pathetic in all literature. The record of the long and heated "controversy"—if such it can be called, where one side only advances any argument, and the other calls names—yet being waged is found in books, pamphlets and articles now probably numbering a thousand or more, but of which little better than a hint respecting its scope, methods, and conclusions can here be given.

Having by elimination disposed of each possible claimant, we are left with *one* who alone meets all the requirements in legal training, classical learning, wide knowledge, scientific attainments, literary craftsmanship, abounding wit, poetic imagination, theatrical experience, and the transcending genius needful to the proper use of natural and acquired gifts in the accomplishment of a great and noble task. High-born—the very highest, according to some—perforce a courtier, a trained diplomat, a far-seeing statesman, a gifted orator, a giant intellect, an abnormal personality, gifted and endowed beyond all mortal men; clothed in an embodiment so finely organized, and of a temperament so sensitive as to be influenced even by the changes of the moon, yet could he stoop to patter with the humblest in his own vernacular, and would, on occasion, as we are told, "out-cant a "chirurgeon" in the jargon of his own craft.

As we come into closer personal touch with this wondrous mortal, our preconception, based on misleading portraiture, ill-founded characterization, and epigrammatic defamation, undergo swift amendment. We recall that the dignified Lord Chancellor was once a high-spirited youth, a man-about-town, a composer of "Masques" and "Triumphs," a frequenter of the theatre to a degree bitterly lamented by his stately mother, and are ready to believe that—the ability, the need, and the opportunity, all concurring—he could easily dash off a "Widow of Watling Street," or a "Merry Devil of Edmonton," and as quickly dispose of them for the customary three or four pounds so convenient to the "briefless barrister," taking good care that the identity of the playwright should be most carefully concealed from his family, and patrons in high position, through whom his hopes for that advancement to place and power, on which he depended for his living and the means of working out his vast plans, must be realized.

Here is a pen-picture sympathetically portrayed by William Hepworth Dixon, author of the "Personal History of Lord Bacon," (wherein he lovingly and faithfully depicts the real character and life-story of one of the world's greatest men, in readable and condensed form):

"Slight in build, rosy and round in flesh, dight in a sumptuous suit; the head well-set, erect, and framed in a thick starched fence of frill; a bloom of study and of travel on the fat, girlish face, which looks far younger than his years; the hat and feather tossed aside from the broad, white brow, over which crisps and curls a mane of dark, soft hair; an English nose, firm, open, straight; mouth delicate and small—a lady's or a jester's mouth—a thousand pranks and humors, quibbles, whims, and laughers lurking in its twinkling, tremulous lines: such is Francis Bacon at the age of twenty-four"; and again, writing of Bacon in 1616, thirty-one years later, his biographer remarks: "Thirty-six years have passed since he entered on the fag and contest of the world; but thirty-six years of toil, thought, study, disappointment, and success, have neither soured his blood nor disturbed the beauty of his face. . . . Brow broad and solid; eye quick yet mild; nose straight and strong, of the pure old English type; beard trim and dainty, as of one to whom grace is nature; over all the countenance a bold, soft, kindling light; an infinite sense of power and subtlety and humor, unmixed with any trace of pride."

We remember, too, that admirers reported him as holding men thrall'd when he rose to address them; that even in his weightiest utterances he could "scarcely refrain from or pass by a jest"; and that the prose of his philosophical writings contains all the elements of the finest poetry, which in places cannot be restrained from bursting forth from its constraining bonds and penetrating with the flavor of its infinite beauty into discerning and understanding minds. We learn that as a child he one day left his play to satisfy himself on a moot point of physics by actual experiment; that at the age of 12 he entered Cambridge and left it shortly after because it could teach him nothing more than he already knew, or could not better learn; that at the age of 16 he was in the diplomatic service of his country; that even at this early age he was forming his plans to lay the entire realm of knowledge under tribute; and that his high aims stopped short of nothing but the "Reformation of the Whole Wide World," not only individually and intellectually, collectively and politically, but dealing with the common things of "men's bread and wine," and the means for their betterment. We seem to find that as a necessary factor in this "Universal Reformation" he conceived the idea of associating with himself like-minded spirits among the "literati" of Europe who—in view of the perils surrounding anyone even suspected of religious or political heresy, and the consequent need of secrecy—should be constituted as an "Invisible Brotherhood," without corporate form, known only to the initiated by pass-word and sign, and whose very existence should be concealed, and if necessary, *denied*, even under the torture of the "question." The doctrine of anonymity—"What's in a Name?"—was fundamental, and in view of ever-present danger, essential. The jargon of an organization ostensibly engaged in search of "the philosopher's stone," and experimenting in "the transmutation of base metals into gold," is read as the cant of these "Illu-

minati" secretly employed in the *diffusion of knowledge*. Publications should be unsigned, given misleading signature, or directly attributed to another than the real author, but might easily be identified by the printer's "cuts" and "flowers," exactly duplicated, or passed on from hand to hand, and by the extraordinary "water-marks" thick-strewn over the pages of these curious old 17th century books, in remarkable variety even in a single volume. Because of the universal strict censorship, private correspondence had to be conducted in cipher and cryptic phrase, in the art of which these "Brothers of the Rosy Cross" were past-masters to a marvellous degree. The art of the Emblematists was employed in its highest perfection in devising Title-Pages, even to the extent of introducing a "fake" portrait of an alleged author on one, or a real likeness skillfully worked in on another attributed to a very different authorship. Burial places, even, should either be quite unmarked, or the monument designated by some peculiar design, device, or suggestive carving, easy to be read by the informed as if graven in plain text. This is a phase of the subject which cannot be more than touched on here but is dealt with at length by specialists, to whose works attention is directed. Further exploration in these rich fields might yield unexpectedly fruitful and profitable results!

The task has been set, the work done, the object obtained, what concern now to the dead clay? The glory or the profit may be borne by "Jack or William or Peter," what matter? "It is more fitting," the Grand Master of the Order exclaims, "that a man's fame should rather follow than go with him," and writes in his will: "for my name and memory I leave it to men's charitable speeches, and to foreign nations, and the next ages"!

Regarded in this illuminative view, the "Shakespeare Mystery" fast begins to clear up—except as yet clouded by the doubts now being voiced in like manner respecting the authorship of Burton and Montaigne, and the questionings which may yet arise in connection with other as yet unsuspected authors—as, for instance, when on the title page of the "Shepherd's Calendar," printed in 1611, and attributed to Edmund Spenser, is seen Lord Bacon's crest up-borne by "supporters," of which one is "royal," and the other belongs to Lord Leicester!—but that's another, and a long, story, impossible of discussion here and now. Neither is it opportune, nor are we free to give, here and now, more than the foregoing brief hint respecting the alleged scope and aims of that mysterious Invisible Brotherhood. In our study of the works of writers dealing with this phase of the question, and that strange composition, "New Atlantis," described on the title page of the original edition of 1627 as "A Worke Unfinished," we find that students, nevertheless, characterize it as a veritable and significant Rosicrucian document, "caviare to the general," perhaps, but the full import of which is clearly understood by the initiated in certain Fraternity circles, and with respect to some details touching

ritual and symbol, "familiar in their mouths as household words." Moreover, some theories concerning an Ideal Commonwealth therein developed are seen embodied in that "magical, superhuman presentation of the Poet as Creator," the "Tempest," last written of the Plays, and placed first in the Folio!

Having eliminated the unfit in our quest for one worthy of these immortal bays, and, as we think, discovered him, we naturally demand some evidence of his right to wear the laurel. Considering the deliberation with which he has "drowned his book deeper than plummet can sound," it will not be expected that, like Rosalind, we shall find the trees decorated with writings in proof of attachment. Remembering that "perspectives" show a different legend when read in full front or at an angle from either side, and that certain elongated puzzle writings can only be read with that "oblique glance" which is enjoined upon us by these cryptic writers, we read between the lines of the stately prose of Essay and Treatise, and the scientific and philosophic works of this solemn and dignified author, and we seem to find something of what we have seen elsewhere in very different form. Deeper enquiry discloses *identities* of studies, opinions, quotations, metaphors, phrases, expressions, words, and even *errors*, and we discover a *parallelism* that is simply astounding, and, to the unprejudiced mind, absolutely convincing, as reference to the various collections by different compilers will show. When we remember Bacon's declaration that it is as easy and fitting to devise new styles of writing as it is to invent new steps in dancing, we can readily account for superficial differences in the outer clothing of the inner thought, and begin to approximate more closely the philosopher and the poet. When we see an essay "On Gardens," not published until 1625, appearing, substantially the same matter poetically transformed, in the "Winter's Tale," first published in 1623, and observe a forced scene dragged into the text of the "Merry Wives of Windsor," printed in its enlarged form in the same year, the humor of which is strained to bring in an allusion to a story told of Sir Nicholas Bacon by his son Francis in his "Apothegms," published in 1624; and when in "Love's Labor's Lost," published as early as 1598, we come across another forced scene dragging in the extraordinary coined word, "Honorificabilitudinitatibus," *an anagram*, which, according to Isaac Hull Platt, resolves itself into the Latin, "Hi ludi tuiti sibi Fr. Bacono nati," which translated reads, "These plays entrusted to themselves proceeded from Francis Bacon," or according to Sir Edwin Durning-Lawrence, "Hi Ludi F. Baconis nati tuiti orbi," *i.e.*, "these plays, F. Bacon's offspring, are preserved for the world," we have something like evidence that they did so proceed and were preserved!

As corroboratory proof, we examine a bundle of old manuscripts of Bacon's discovered in Northumberland House in 1867, the list of contents of which shows that the Plays of Richard II. and Richard III. once formed a part, and on the cover of which, among other scribblings, the names of "Francis Bacon" and "William Shakespeare"—*appearing in juxtaposition as no-*

where else—are repeated many times, and the anagram before alluded to is also written in another experimental form discarded in favor of the better one used, we seem at last to have got the two names together where they rightfully belong, on the title page of one book! On turning to another manuscript of Bacon's, "The Promus of Formularies and Elegancies," we see a vast collection of proverbs, aphorisms, quotations, phrases, expressions, and turns of speech, forming the raw material out of which the Plays are constructed; and on examining that curious old work, the "Sylva Sylvarum or Natural Historie" described on the title page as "Written by the Right Honourable Francis Lo. Verulam Viscount St. Alban" and "Published after the Author's Death by William Rawley, Doctor of Divinity, late his Lordship's Chaplaine," London, 1627, we see another "Store-house" of that amazing scientific knowledge with which the Plays are crammed, of which book Judge Webb observes—according to Rev. Father Sutton, S.J.—"There is scarcely a physical fact which is mentioned in the *Natural History* of Bacon, that is not employed as a poetical illustration in the plays of Shakespeare. There is scarce an experiment, however mean; there is scarce a speculation, however fantastic; there is scarce an error, however obstinate and perverse; there is scarce a scientific intuition, however original and profound, to be discovered in the *Natural History* that is not also to be discovered in the plays." Moreover, when we notice that the gap in the historical plays between Richard III. and Henry VIII. has been filled by Bacon's "History of Henry the VIIth," exactly fitting in and suggestively interlocking, we seem to be on the track of direct evidence; and when we find Bacon's signature at the beginning and end of "Shake-Speare's" "Rape of Lucrece," among other places where it is not supposed to be, we get something which may be accepted as proof positive.

When we rummage among the chips and shavings—though most carefully preserved they be—of those old literary workshops, we find one man writing of his friend "who loved better to be a poet than to be accounted so," and another who says: "His lordship was a good poet, but concealed"; when we hear this author himself speaking of mysterious "Works of the Alphabet" and "Works of Recreation," which might bring him greater glory than others better known and esteemed, begging a friend to "be good to concealed poets," and declaring in the most solemn of compositions, a prayer: "I have, though in a despised weed, procured the good of all men"; when we find an intimate friend and confidant, to whom he was in the habit of sending copies of his books, in writing his thanks for some "great and noble token of favor," regretting he could not return weight for weight, but would do so "Measure for Measure," and again declaring: "The most prodigious wit that ever I knew, of my nation and of this side of the sea, is of your lordship's name, though he be known by another"; when we hear the great lawyer, Coke, in a heated wrangle in open court blusteringly threaten his opponent, Bacon, with arrest for some great scandal or offence, and note Bacon's mild retort that he "was at

fault, and hunted on an old scent," and find that he claimed and promptly got the protection of his cousin Cecil; when we read that one of his objections to assuming the hateful task imposed upon him as prosecuting attorney in the state trial of Essex—in which the treasonable play of Richard II. bore such prominent part—that "having been wronged by bruits before, they would expose me to them more; and it would be said I gave in evidence mine own tales"; and, remembering the dramatists' charges of imposture against Shakspeare, we are assured that questions of duality were fully understood in certain high quarters, and that a well-defined conspiracy of silence respecting it existed, and was maintained as rigidly and as easily as those of later days respecting the authorship of the "Waverley Novels" and the "Letters of Junius," or the identity of "Fiona Macleod."

In accounting for the cryptic pseudonym adopted as the author's signature, we recall that Minerva, the Goddess of Wisdom, the preserver of the state, the slayer of ignorance, who sprang, full caparisoned, from the head of Jove, is depicted armed with helmet, breast-plate, shield, and spear, with which she threatens the foe, and remember the eulogies addressed to Bacon by contemporaries under his appellation of "Pallas"—the spear-shaker—the Greek of the goddess' name. We read Ben Jonson's lines of the Folio Introductory lauding the author, who, he says, "seems to shake a lance as brandished in the face of Ignorance," and can hear the note of the plays—"Ignorance is the curse of God"—ringing again in our ears. We can understand, too, the delight of this subtle artist in finding such apt and convenient mask behind which to hide as he drops the formal "Pallas" and takes on the mouth-filling "Shake-Speare" in setting to work on his deathless studies, using the mean vehicle and "despised weed" of the staged drama—perhaps subsidized—"holding the mirror up to nature" in the manner taught by the old masters of classic Greece and Rome, even improving on their consummate art, and instructing the puppets of his living pictures in the fundamentals of their mimic craft, and the technique of portrayal, as shown in Hamlet's address to the players. And who among the "groundlings" could declare it to be otherwise when he and his powerful sustainers would have it so, especially if, as it must be assumed, the jovial actor-manager and tavern wit, shrewd enough to appreciate the money-bringing value of a play, skilled in the technique of stage production, possessing even sufficient ability to throw in a few "gags" to tickle the ears and pander to the tastes of these same "groundlings," was superficially qualified to carry off the deception, and did but play his profitable part and hold his tongue?

Seen in the light of modern investigations, how the old view respecting the authorship and fortuitous production of these marvels of literature seems "baseless as the fabric of a vision," and, in the added light breaking, destined to "fade and leave not a wrack behind"! As fresh assurance comes with each new discovery, and closer study reveals in greater measure the comprehensive *purposes* underlying and permeating the plays, the traditional belief yet held in high quarters is shelved among

the "back numbers" with that other mistaken one of the deluded scholars of the eighteenth century in their acceptance of the authenticity of the "Ireland Forgeries." That the plays have purposes of the highest aim, and lessons of the weightiest import, is the conclusion of Gervinus, one of the most illuminative of "orthodox" commentators. He thus asserts: "Shakespeare's moral philosophy is Christianity purified from everything exaggerated and equivocal," to which may be added the words with which Swinburne closes one of the latest appreciations of "Shake-Speare": "All that can be known of manhood, of womanhood, of childhood, he knew better than any other man ever born. It is not only the crowning glory of England, it is the crowning glory of mankind, that such a man should ever have been born as William Shakespeare!"

Would you have the evil of intemperance and the insanity of jealousy depicted as nowhere else?—read Othello! Would you be warned of the frenzy of love in hot youth, or trace the degradation of lustful passion, to the undoing of the great?—read Romeo and Juliet, and Antony and Cleopatra! Would you know the folly of debt, the meanness of avarice, and the sacrifice true friendship is capable of?—read the Merchant of Venice! Would you study the workings of remorse consequent on the giving way to impulses of unbridled ambition, or the philosophy of avenging Nemesis relentlessly dogging crime?—read Macbeth and Hamlet!

Studies for the "Cure of the Commonweal" you will find illustrated by antithesis in the author's notable manner, the "Divinity that doth hedge a king" being set over against the dangerous power of the "wavering multitude." You will see the "right divine to rule" offset by the deposition scene in Richard II.—suppressed in early editions, but staged by the Essex faction on the eve of their rebellion in the endeavor to rouse the people against Elizabeth. Is the king's person sacred?—then see him, the victim of the basest filial ingratitude, wandering a beggar on the heath; and would you, in those days of rack and thumb-screw, proclaim the truth, axiomatic in these—"Thought is Free!"—it is only through the lips of a drunken clown you may venture to do it!

If the plays are not only all this, *and infinitely more*, but, as some declare, enfold an inner secret history, touching, among other things, the honor and chastity of the "Virgin Queen," and the succession of the Tudor dynasty, concealed in ingenious and complex cipher of phrase, word, and letter, after the methods laid down elsewhere, here surely is a store of such unimagined wealth as the world has never dreamed of, and is the excuse for attempting a little cipher-work of one's own in these lines:

"SHAKE-SPEARE."

(This cipher-sonnet enfolds in a regular sequence the bracketed letters of the name and title: (F)RANCIS (B)ACON, Baron (V)erulam and Viscount St. (A)lbans, as will be shown by tak-

ing the first letter of the first "foot" of the first line, the second of the second, the third of the third, and so on to the tenth, beginning again at the first letter of the eleventh and continuing in the same way to the fourteenth.)

Fearsome the shadow of yon awful curse
Upstairs its threat'ning finger o'er the stones
Where troop awed pilgrim throngs above dry bones
Whisp'ring a name false-carven lines inherse—
Poet's light blade, catch-coin to deck lean purse.
The yard, all wondering, its magic owns,
And clapper-claws the lack-shame daw, enthrones
Him bard who struts and mouths Want's bartered verse.
Fame, perjured blazon, usances, and lands,
And gentle sepulture for base-born clay,
O'erweigh the witness of the unsigned pact
'Twixt needy wit and nimble greed's demands.
Mimes the vain actor night's slow hours away—
Time calls for "Author" in the curtain-act!

The question of ciphers attaching to the subject, being as it is of such amazing proportions, infinite complexities, and abstruse technicalities, is a matter properly appertaining to experts for its elucidation. The very suggestion staggers the ordinary reader of the present day, who is uninformed of the conditions respecting the merely fanciful conceits of the cryptographers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, to say nothing of the wide application of their art to the concealment of state secrets. Even if one were at all competent, simply to attempt to explain in bare outline the conclusions of the various writers on the subject is beyond the possibilities of such discussion as may now be entered upon, and students must, of necessity, apply to the works themselves. When, however, writers of talent and scholarship, eminent in professional and public life, devote laborious days, months, years even, to study and research, and stake their reputations on their published conclusions, they are at least deserving of a fair hearing, with a view to agreement or disproof. When one writer (Donnelly) pledges his standing as an author and public man in declaring that a few pages of the plays of First and Second Henry IV. are simply a mass of cipher words keyed together in a certain mathematical order to tell a secret story, he does not do it for the delight of being stoned. When another (Wigston) devotes his scholarly ability to show the cipher significance of Bacon's Henry VII. and the English edition of the Advancement of Learning of 1640, and demonstrates his contentions by *fac-simile* evidence, his good faith should be admitted, and effort made to show that he is either right or wrong. When another (Gallup), at the expense of health and eyesight impaired in poring over the italic types in old books of the period in the application of Bacon's bi-literal cipher as she alleges it was intended to be applied, evolves a secret history, amazing beyond

all romance, she is either fool or knave, or absolutely right, and should be pilloried or praised accordingly. And when the last, and perhaps most remarkable of them all (Booth) gives ocular demonstration of the existence of Baconian signatures in acrostic form in all the Shakespearean literature, he is entitled to more than the cold shoulder which appears to be, as yet, his only reward. Rejecting the overwhelming mass of circumstantial evidence as inconclusive, an unbelieving generation demands "a sign," and when this is given, the messengers are forthwith set upon with the old-time cry of imperiled craftsmen, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"

However disturbing to one's preconceptions some of the theories here advanced may be, there is no claim to originality, much less any attempt at exhaustive treatment of a most amazing and vast subject. It is rather intended to be merely suggestive, and perhaps introductory, to the study of the large body of literature which has been put forth by many able students and serious writers in their endeavor to elucidate a most perplexing question, a partial list of the more important of which is hereto appended. There is chapter and verse for every statement, and here or there in these productions will be found categorical answers, to every so-called argument and objection advanced by opponents who are at the disadvantage of knowing, and caring for, one side only of the controversy, the settlement of which involves the revision of opinion, the re-adjustment of criticism, the re-dedication of shrines, and the re-valuation of stocks of printed books; hence the bitterness of interested opposition, so concerted, not to say organized, as to suggest a conspiracy to suppress the controversy, and crush all serious discussion, allowing only the fantastic and inane to appear, with a view to attacking it on such grounds. There will also be found embalmed in these pages every variety and form of derisive, discourteous, and disparaging epithet which the malevolent ingenuity of traditionalists could discover or invent to discredit their opponents, to the almost complete exhaustion of a very copious vocabulary. Students complain that their enquiries are so evaded, and their researches so blocked, as to raise doubts respecting the good faith of custodians of the sources of information, and evoke the expression of a belief that *someone*, or *some body*, really *know* a great deal more than they will tell, at least until such time as disclosure is allowed, a view which would seem to be confirmed by the historian, Jennings, in the closing words of his "Rosicrucians," affirming the present existence and activity of an "Invisible Brotherhood," who cannot be known, and may not appear, because—"it is enjoined"!

As an illustration of this antagonism, here is what one of the latest writers, William Stone Booth, in his monumental—and, as usual, almost totally ignored—work, "Some Acrostic Signatures of Francis Bacon," has to say:

"My enquiries among professional literary friends drew from one of them the serious threat that my acquaintance would be dropped if I investigated the subject further; and from

another the well-meant advice that if I would consult my best interests I should avoid a subject connected in the professional mind with the work of charlatans; and from another that 'that is a matter on which the scholarly world has made up its mind,' . . . at the outset I had found that if I pursued a despised study my professional career might be endangered."

The last resort of the hard-pressed debater—when condescending to discuss the question at all—is, "We have the Plays! What does it matter who wrote them?"

No better reply to this objection occurs than in the remarkably *poetic* words of Bacon himself: . . . "the inquiry of truth, which is the love-making, or wooing of it—the knowledge of truth, which is the presence of it—the belief of truth, which is the enjoying of it—is the sovereign good of human nature"; coupling fittingly with this the declaration "Shake-Speare" puts into the mouth of Hamlet: "I will find out where truth is hid, though it were hid in the very centre!"

To the crowning objection, "The case is *settled*," the dictum of a later-day philosopher is interposed: "Nothing is settled until it is settled *right*!" And remembering that judgment has been given *ex parte* in Star Chamber proceedings, and that evidence has been distorted, suppressed, or simply laughed out of court, appeal is promptly taken from the *ex cathedra* pronouncements of ermined pedants, and the case brought before the sharpened wit of the shrewd man-on-the-street as a jury for judgment upon the fact.

Look here, upon this picture, and on this;
See, what a grace was seated on this brow;
Hyperion's curls, the front of Jove himself;
An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;
A station like the herald Mercury
New-lighted on a Heaven-kissing hill;
A combination, and a form, indeed,
Where every god did seem to set his seal,
To give the world assurance of a man;
. Have you eyes?
Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed
And batten on this moor?
. and what judgment
Would step from this to this?
. A vice of kings;
A cutpurse of the empire and the rule;
That from a shelf the precious diadem stole,
And put it in his pocket!
. A king of shreds and patches!

Hamlet, Act III., Sc. 4.

There has been a more than forty years wandering in the wilderness, and it perforce must be that some shall die ere yet their foot be set even on the borders of the Promised Land, the longing for the flesh pots of Egypt still abiding with them;

but a *new* generation—free-born—“Sons of the Morning”—
moves ever on, the flush of dawn breaking over the distant
hills and lighting their eager faces, and to them shall be given
to occupy and possess the Land!

Here is a cause to which the keen perception, deep insight,
and judicial penetration of the trained intelligences of those
“Young Scholars of the Universities,” who were Bacon’s hope,
may well be devoted. Fearless of the capped and gowned and
hooded bogies who would bar their path; heedless of traditions,
hoary with age and grey with dust, handed down with all the
authority of a “faith once delivered to the saints”; strong in
the assurance that the heresy of yesterday will be the creed of
to-morrow, and that upon the men of to-day lies the duty of
bringing it about; let them follow with Hamlet on his tireless
quest for Truth, tracking it through fen and thicket and dank
morass, wherever it may have strayed, *or been hidden*, even to
the bottom of that stately tomb shrined in England’s heart!

Indifferent to contempt, scornful of obloquy, let them still
press on and their slogan ever be: “Play up, and play the
game”! quitting the field only as the soldier of old, carrying
his shield, or borne upon it! And if it be that some shall fall
ere yet the victory be won, it shall be joy to those yet in the
strife in knowing that these “have fought a good fight and
have kept the faith”; and perhaps there may yet arise a pane-
gyrist who will worthily tell of their exploit, as one poetaster
has haltingly endeavored acrostically to acclaim the first to fall,
as truly a martyr as any who were flung to the lions on the red
sands of the Arena—“butchered to make a Roman holiday”!

RENUNCIATION.

(Read initial letters *upward*.)

Not as the Maid defied the banner’d power
Of furious England ravishing her France
Comes she, with bravery of sword and lance.
All-weakly armed, fond Idol-cult’s high tower
Breasting, she fronts Opioniatry’s fell shower,
And cruel stab of lip-curl’d arrogance,
In fearless quest. Ah! Daughter of Mischance,
Lost, all!—Friends, Reputation, Life’s full flower!
E’en as the Maid, by ruthless bigot Time
Despitely used, enshrined in after days,
So, owning Poesy’s golden lamp defiled,
Song’s laurels shameless worn by buskin’d mime,
Imperial leaflet shorn from mummer’s bays
May “Shake-Speare’s” England yield New England’s
child!

SAMUEL M. BAYLIS.

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